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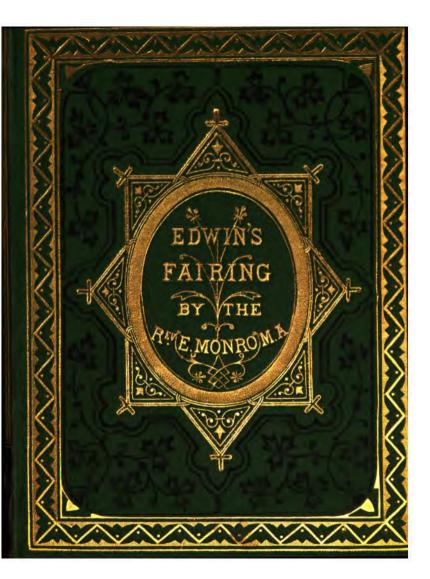
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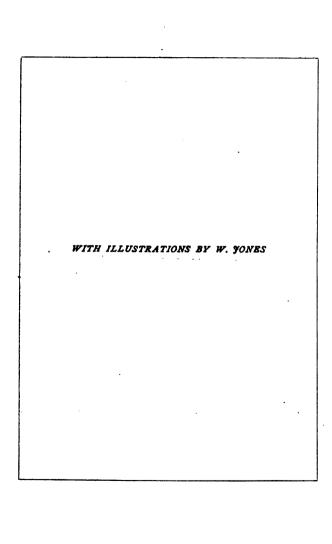
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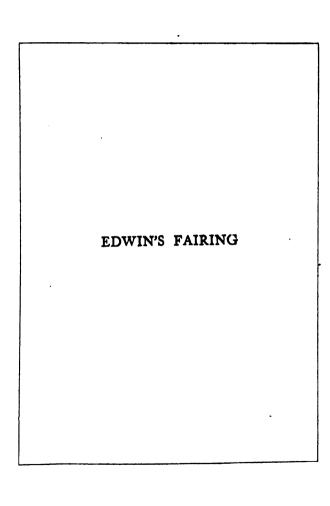
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EDWIN'S FAIRING

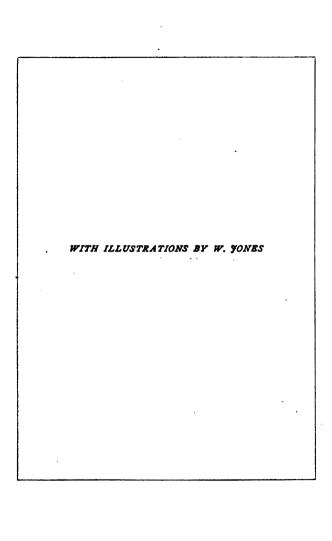
BY THE REV. E. MONRO, M.A. AUTHOR OF "HARRY AND ARCHIE," ETC.





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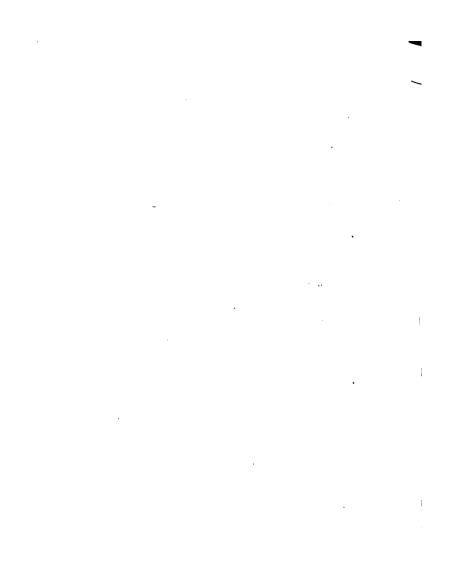
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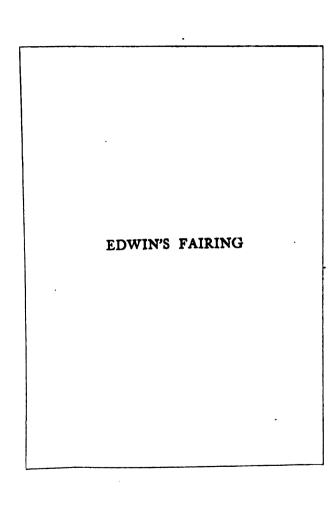
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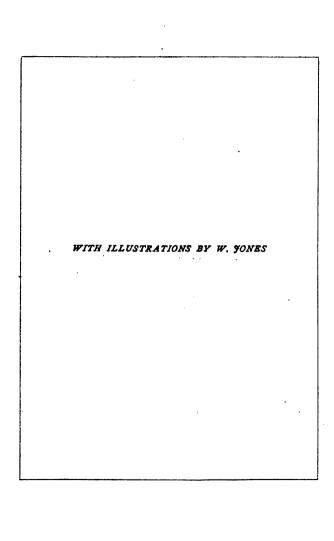
N a beautiful cottage, with a thatched roof, which was covered with china-roses and honey-suckles, and here and there patches of white and purple clematis, there lived an old gentleman, who was very rich, but very odd. Though he spoke crossly, he had a kind heart, for everyone in the neighbourhood said so. His name was Woodcock.











and had not been open for years, not since a certain Lord Capel had come to dine with Mr. Woodcock, as Harris told Helen. that was long ago, before old Mrs. Woodcock died; and now it stood there shadowed over with seringias, and laburnums, and lilacs. the other gate, higher up in the garden, opened out into the narrow lane, with its high bank covered with moss and flowers opposite, and two tall old elm-trees, between which was a stile, and over it was seen the grey tower of the parish church.

It was to this gate Helen loved to go when a little girl, to see "the cows go down the lane;" and when older, to go through it with her little straw basket, to pick flowers and to look for strange, wonderful coloured insects. But sometimes Helen met with adventures, of which I will speak presently.

Old Mr. Woodcock had a horror of men working for him. Instead of one man-servant, whom he used to employ, named Burton, he had now two lads named Jem and Sam; and in the garden he employed two lads named Frank and Robert, in place of an old gardener whom he used to have, and whom he had now pensioned in the village, and who usually went by the name of Dr. Smith.

Frank and Robert were great friends of Helen. She would talk to them, if she could, for hours together.

Far different was the conduct of Mr. Woodcock to Frank and Bob. "Hallo! what are you fellows doing? Idling, I'll answer for it, doing more mischief than work. Get along with you, I'll nail your ears to the wall-nail your ears to the wall, do you hear?" Frank and Robert did hear, and directly went on with their work as if nothing had happened. They feared the dreadful threat of having their "ears nailed to the wall" as little as Helen (who had just been hard at work gossiping with them, and hindering their work) feared the next lovely "painted lady" butterfly which she came across. For after all, who did fear Mr. Woodcock? He was very kind at heart spite of all his rough words.

Frank was sixteen and Robert

was fourteen, and they slept in the same room. It was remarkably comfortable. If they had been young Woodcocks they could not have been made more so. Each had a bed, and a box, and a chair, and a piece of carpet. They had a chest of drawers between them, and a looking-glass, and a table. They had each a bookshelf, with certain books which Mr. Woodcock gave them, and certain books which they got themselves. The room was always beautifully clean—Helen's was not cleaner—for although Mr. Woodcock threatened

three times a day to "nail their ears to the wall," he was always going up-stairs to see into the condition of "The Boys' Gable," as he called it. When he was in a very good humour he would leave a shilling a-piece for them on the table, although within five minutes he would be disputing with them about paying a penny, on account of some idleness or inattention to work, caused by a little talk with their old and persevering gossip, Helen.

Dear old Mr. Woodcock, he was an odd man, but he had a kind heart.

I fancy I see him now, with his short breeches, his blue worsted stockings, his high shoes, his brown, Quaker-like coat, his short, low hat, and his well-known white stick, with its black cross handle at the top of it.

It was in the month of June—a lovely day. There were no clouds, and the hot sun burned down from the blue sky upon pinks, and honey-suckles, and early roses, and tree-lupines, and the first red strawberries, and the fresh mown grass on the lawn.

Helen, with her straw basket on her arm, and her straw bonnet on her head, had as usual been interrupting and delighting, with her rapid and lively talk, her old friends Robert and Frank, until something about "ears to the wall" came out of a window. The boys went on working, and Helen went about her work among butterflies and flowers. But she had scarcely begun when her attention was drawn to the green trellis-work gate. The slightest event or circumstance could draw off the little girl's attention. Everything, which happened anywhere, was Helen's business.

When she reached the old gate, she peeped through. On the opposite bank sat a boy, dressed in dark fustian, the worse for wear, His head was leaning on his hand. Close behind him was a squirrel, which was running about on the bank, returning every few seconds to its young master. At the boy's feet lay a cage. On his head was a small cap, ragged and torn, under which his long dark hair fell in curls on his pale, white forehead. He did not move either for the squirrel or for Helen.

Helen could not bear this silence; so she opened the conversation.

"Boy!" she said. But he did not seem to hear. The fact was, she was a little shy, and so she spoke low. "Little boy!" said she, in a louder tone. The boy looked up, and the squirrel as quickly ran to its master. Helen was startled—first at what she had done, and then at the size of "the little boy." He was tall and thin. He had large eyes, very dark, indeed

quite black. But his long dark eyelashes made them look quite soft. His manner was quiet, as he took his ragged cap off his head, and, opening his torn coat to let the frightened squirrel nestle in his bosom, bowed to the little lady. The squirrel had turned round, and having twisted its long bushy tail under the arm of its master, it peeped out with its tiny black eyes at the source of danger.

Helen was frightened at what she had done; but there was one comfort, the green gate was between her and the boy, and she was able to see him, by leaning her hand, with the basket on her arm, as she peeped through her diamond trellis at the boy. "Boy," again said Helen. The boy bowed, and the squirrel disappeared under the waistcoat. "Boy, what's your name?

who are you? what are you?"

The youth answered the first of these questions, the other two being a little beyond his powers.

- "My name is Edwin, Miss."
- "And how old are you?"
- "Sixteen, and a little more."

- "And what's the squirrel's name?
 "Fido."
- "Fido!" said Helen. "What an

odd name! It's not English. What are you, little boy? Are you a Greek, or a Persian, or a Hindoo?"

"Young lady," said he, "I am an English boy—at least my mother was English. My father was an Italian, but I have lived nearly all my life in England."

"An Italian!" cried the little gossip. "Then are you a son of the Pope?"

Edwin smiled. "No, not quite,"

said he. "My poor father was killed in the wars with the Austrians, and when I was little my mother sent me to England to be taken care of by my aunt, for mother had a good place with some English people at Florence."

- "My mother had a dog called Florence," said Helen. "Are all the dogs in Florence called Flory?"
 - "I don't know," said the boy.
- "Where is your aunt?" she next inquired.
- "She's dead, Miss; been dead two years. She was very, very good to me."

Edwin looked down on the head of the squirrel, which had peeped out again.

- "Dear me! Then whom do you live with?"
 - " Nobody," said he.
 - "Then where do you sleep?"
- "Sometimes in the hedge, and sometimes in a barn."
 - "How do you get sheets?"

Edwin smiled again.

- "There are no sheets. There's only hay."
- "Dear, dear," said the little questioner, urged on by her interest and

curiosity to open the gate, which she did half hesitating, half fright-ened. With her finger on her small red lips, and her full blue eyes fixed on the boy, she stood close to him. His tall slim figure, rising taller before her than it had seemed as seen through the gate, startled her.

"Oh," she said, "you are a big boy; I thought you were little. Where's your mother?"

"Dead, I'm afraid," said he, sadly, stroking the little animal. "I have not heard of her for a long, long time—not for long before aunt died."

Helen became riveted; her busy heart was full. The appearance of Edwin was quite enough to strike an older person than Helen. His face, though worn, was very beautiful. His large dark eyes, and hair, and his sallow cheek, told of his Italian birth. He was very tall for his age. His manner was singularly refined and gentle for an English beggar. His Southern birth had given him this. still kept his cap in his hand, and Helen could not take her eyes off him.

"Big boy," at last she said, "how did you get Fido?"

"I bought him," said he, "when aunt died, with a few pence I had saved."

"What have you had to eat today, big boy, and what has Fido had?"

"He has had some nuts I bought him, for he is a good friend to me."

"A friend!" said Helen. "I've got a cat. I wonder if she will be a friend to me. I'll ask her. I should like to have a cat for a friend. But what have you had to eat?"

"Nothing," said Edwin, looking down.

"Oh, stop a minute," said she; "I'll be back directly." So saying, Helen opened the gate again, and ran off, looking back, and saying, "Mind you stay, big boy, till I come back." Edwin bowed, and sat down again on the grass bank.

"Old Grindle will give me something," said she to herself. "I can always get anything I like out of her if I coax her well." And she dashed past the acacia-tree and the lilac-tree, and, going round by the kitchenyard, was soon with Old Grindle in the kitchen.

Old Grindle was the cook. She was very thin, and was cross to most people, but very kind to Helen. "Well, Miss," said she, "and what now?"

- "I want this basket filled quite full with meat and bread—quite full, dear Old Grindle."
 - "Bless me! and what for?"
- "Never mind that—I want it, and that's enough!"
- "It's for one of your old gossips there—Frank or Robert—I know."
 - "No, it's not," said Helen. And

soon she was off again to her friend in the lane. She poured the whole contents of her basket into the boy's lap.

Edwin looked up, tears of gratitude in his eyes. Helen's eyes filled, too, and looked bluer than ever. The poor boy rose to thank her, and then sat down to share his meal with Fido.

"Stay one minute more," she said. And away she flew again.

Her room was in a thatched gable. The summer roses, shining like stars, used to beat against her window in the early June morning, glistening with dew-drops in the hot sun. Helen took a little box from a drawer. She opened it, and poured out its contents on the table. There was just three shillings and twopence-half-penny. It was all Helen's savings. She was soon off again to the gate. She had got about half-way, when she was startled by a voice behind her. She turned pale, and stopped.

"Hallo, Helen! where are you off to in such a hurry? Come here! You're always after some wild freak. Come here!" "Oh, grandfather!" said the trembling child, "I only——"

"Go on with your work, you idle fellows!" said he, turning to the two boys, who had looked off on hearing the conversation. "I'll nail your ears to the wall!—See if I don't."

The lads went on working.

"Well, Miss Helen, you 'only' what?"

Helen had had time to recover herself. "Oh, dear grandfather, here is such a nice, dear little boy—I mean a big boy—out in the lane, and he has got a squirrel; and he says his father was an Italian soldier, and his mother's dead, and his aunt's dead, and——"

"What!" cried the old man, in a voice of thunder—"a rascally beggar-boy near my gate! Where is the fellow?"

Helen trembled with fright for her young friend.

"What are you going to do, girl?"

"Why—why—grandfather, I was just going to give him something that I've got of my own—quite my own—my very own—that's all, to get the boy a bed, for he sleeps on hay and straw."

"Hay and straw!" thundered the old man—"Hay and straw! He shall sleep in the vagrants' cage to-night! Where is this young ruffian?"

"Oh, grandfather, don't, don't hurt him!" said the alarmed little Sister of Mercy.

By this time the old gentleman had reached the gate. Edwin was still quietly eating his food, and Fido gambolling by his side.

"Who are you, sirrah?" said the

old man, flinging open the gate—
"Who are you? What do you
mean by begging at my gates?
Don't you know there's a law against
vagrants? As sure as you are
there, I will have you locked up
to-night!"

Poor Helen had slunk a little behind her grandfather, trying to make signs to Edwin, to encourage him. She knew her grandfather. Edwin rose up from the hedge, and took his cap off again.

"What is that you've got there? Bread and meat? Stolen, of course. I'll have you taken up in a trice. Here, Frank, come here!"

Frank approached.

"The little lady there, sir, gave it me," said Edwin, a slight colour rising in his face. "I didn't steal it. I never do steal!"

"What right have you, Miss Nelly, to give my food to these tramps?"

"Old Grindle gave it me," said she.

"Please, sir," said the boy, "the little lady was very kind, and meant no harm. She asked me if I was hungry, and I said I was; and she ran and fetched it me. I'm sure she

meant no harm. I'm very sorry, sir. I'll go away at once. Only don't be angry with the little lady!"

"No, don't go!" said Helen, half in a whisper, holding by her grandfather's coat with one hand, while she put the fingers of the other up to her lip.

The poor lad had a calm quiet manner which for the moment checked the old man.

"What's that animal you've got there?"

"A squirrel," said he. "He earns my bread for me."

"And where did you steal that?" For a moment fire flashed in the dark Italian eye of the boy, as he said, "I've stolen nothing that I have, sir; and God knows I never would. I'm a lone boy in the world. I have no home, and no friends but this little squirrel. But I've been better taught than to steal, and I know where I have a friend, if I pray to Him, and try to do what He tells me. Come along, Fido-we'll go." And saying this, Edwin caught up his little companion, and put it

into its cage.

"Go along with you," said the old gentleman, "for an idle vagrant!"

"I'm not idle!" said the boy. "I would work, if I could; but I haven't the strength. I take any job I can; but I can't well use one arm, which was hurt long ago. Thank you, kind lady! The Lord will bless you." So saying, he slowly wound his way by the hedge-side, with Fido under his arm.

Poor Helen's heart was full. Her eyes were fixed on her young *protégé*, as he slowly and sadly moved

away, without a friend and without a home.

"It is a sad world!" said he to himself. "There is no one cares for me!"

He had only just reached the foot of the lane, when, unhappy and hopeless as he was, he heard the steps of some one coming after him. "Stop! Stop!" said a voice almost breathless—"do stop!"

Edwin looked round. Little Helen was running down the road. "Stop!" she said again, quite weary with running.

The boy stopped by the hedge.

"There," said she, "is something to get you a bed to-night." And she thrust her three shillings and twopence-halfpenny into his hand.

The boy looked at the money, and then looked at Helen. "Is it for me?" said he.

- "Oh, yes," said she, "all for you. Boy," said she, "are you good?"
 - "I hope so," said he.
 - "Do you love God?"
 - "I try to do so."
 - "Do you say your prayers?"



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- "Yes, little lady," said he.
- "But how can you? You said you never went to bed. You sleep on hay or straw. People say their prayers when they go to bed, and when they get up. I do. You don't go to bed: how can you say your prayers?"

Edwin was somewhat puzzled how to answer. "I often pray when I walk, Miss," said he.

- "Then are you very good? Do you know your catechism?" went on the little gossip.
 - "Hallo! Helen, Nelly, you naughty

girl, come here. Come here, you little hussy. How dare you go down and talk to that vagabond? Come here!"

The little girl coloured, and starting away from the boy, ran frightened up the lane to her grandfather, who was standing outside the green trellis-work gate.

Poor Edwin wandered on by the hedge side. The three shillings and twopence-halfpenny would only help him on for two or three days to come. His heart was sad enough. He felt he had no friend, and no home.

"Call that boy back, call him back directly," cried the old man.

Helen looked astonished and alarmed
—"Oh, grandfather," said she, "don't,
pray don't hurt him, he is——"

"Hallo, boy!" cried Mr. Woodcock.

Edwin did not stop, but lingered by the side of the hedge, determined not to attend to the call of the old gentleman, who had already spoken so harshly to him, and who, he knew, had no right over him.

But Helen knew him better—
"Come back, little boy, big boy,
Fido, Squirrel; come back," cried she,

running down the lane with all her power.

"I cannot, kind lady," said the boy.
"I cannot, to be so hardly spoken to.
I have done nothing wrong to the gentleman, and I cannot come back to be spoken to again."

"Come with me, I ask you," said Helen, panting for breath. "Come with me."

The boy looked up at his friend. She had *indeed* been his friend. He took up his squirrel and followed her.

"Hallo, you sir!" said Mr. Wood-

cock. "Here, I'll give you board and lodging, and something every week; and I'll clothe you; and you shall do just as much work as you can. Come along: you shan't want a friend."

Edwin stood near the hedge, thinking the old man was surely mad. Helen, by this time, had pulled both her ribbons off her bonnet. She knew her grandfather—all was right, now, and she winked her eyes at the boy.

"Thank you, sir," said the youth.
"You are very kind—very. I will do

my best, my very best. But——" said he, looking first at him and then at Helen.

- "But, but," said Mr. Woodcock.
 "What buts are there?"
- "Little lady," said Edwin in a whisper, as he leant towards her—
 "It's very kind, very kind of the gentleman, but I cannot leave Fido, indeed I cannot. Fido has done all for me."
- "What does he say? what does he say?" said the old man.
- "Oh, grandfather," said she, "he only wants to take the squirrel with

him; he won't leave it. He may take it, mayn't he?"

"Take what?" cried he. "Take the squirrel? Yes, to be sure. The squirrel? Take twenty, if he likes."

Helen ran towards Edwin. All her tears were gone, and her bright blue eyes shone out wide and beautiful on the vagrant boy. "Yes, yes," said she, "yes. Come Guido, Fido, Squirrel, Pope, and all. Come along, come quick."

Edwin hardly knew what to do, so changed in a minute or two were all his thoughts and his fortunes. He went through the gate, and up the gravel walk.

"Take the boy to Grindle," said the old man, as he turned in half way to the door of the house. Helen needed no telling. She ran into the kitchen yard, and ran back again. Edwin and Fido were coming along under the trees which covered the path from the door to the kitchen yard.

"Bless my heart," said Mrs. Grindle, "what a bustle we are in! And what now, Miss Helen?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing at all," said

she. "But dear old Grindle, you have got to let this boy sit down in the kitchen for a little while, and then I will come and tell you all about it." Edwin followed his young friend into the kitchen.

She was now all bustle to go with Harris, to see the room where the beggar boy was to sleep. Her voice went on incessantly, while her hands were prepared to help in every movement. All was arranged as neat and clean as could be. Edwin's bed and furniture was in the same room with the other two boys; and

when all was finished. Helen ran down to tell the boy. Harris took him up with the squirrel to their new home, while Helen stayed with Grindle, to hear from Harris on her return what the boy thought of it all. fellow, he was quite bewildered at the sudden change in his fortunes, and the no less sudden change in the tone and manner of the old man. He was delighted and thankful beyond the words in which he tried to express it. The squirrel was placed on the table in its cage, and by Harris's care the poor little animal, companion of so many weary days of wandering, had all it wanted in the way of nuts and milk. Helen was in ecstacies at the whole thing, and when in the morning Edwin appeared in the new clothes which the old gentleman had told Harris to get for him, she scarcely knew the dark-eyed, pale-faced wanderer, and half wished to see him back again in the old rags in which she had first seen him through the green trellised work of the garden gate.

That day Edwin began to

work with the other boys in the garden.

One morning the three boys were suddenly summoned to the little study of Mr. Woodcock, a strange octagon room with no window, but only a skylight, well known to all the inmates. What he wanted with the three boys they could not imagine. Whether it was to "nail their ears to the wall," or to give them their wages, or to make them a present of something extra to help them with their clothes, they knew not, for they were used to his oddities, and not much afraid of his threats.

"Hallo, boys," he said; "look you here. You know it's the fair to-morrow in the village; now I know you'll go, whether I say you may or not. So you may go, and I'll give you a holiday, on condition that you come back by the time I tell you."

All three bowed. Frank and Robert looked thoroughly happy, and could hardly help laughing aloud for joy. Edwin thanked his master kindly, but looked less joyous

—"for," thought he, "I have no money to spend." All he had saved had gone for the food and comfort of his little faithful companion.

"Do you hear, lads?" said the old gentleman. "Do you hear?"

The two lads with faces full of boyish glee thanked him heartily and sincerely. Edwin hung his head and remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say, young gentleman?" said the old man; "don't you care to go to the fair?"

"Thank you, sir," said the boy, "I should like it very much."

"I dare say," said Mr. Woodcock, in his rough way, "that you have often been at fairs; yes, and shown your squirrel there. Yes, yes, and got more than a penny by him, too." The pale face of the poor boy coloured, and for a moment his large dark eye flashed with indignation.

"Well, well," said his master, going on with a drawing he had in hand. "I dare say Fido has made many a penny by you." "Thank you, sir," said all three, on leaving the room, while Frank touched his forehead, Robert pulled the front lock of his hair, and Edwin bowed. Beggar as he had been, there was something naturally refined and gentle about him.

"Hallo, you fellows—stop, can't you? What are you in such a hurry for? I'll nail your ears to the wall!"

They all drew back.

"What! you say I'm a cross old man, do you?"

"No, sir," said all the boys together. "Now attend to me. I will give you ten shillings a-piece to spend at the fair. Yes, ten shillings a-piece—do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, but here is the point. The one of you three who brings back the best thing from the fair shall have a sovereign in gold, over and above these ten shillings."

The boys looked astonished, and the old gentleman went on with his drawing.

"Get along with you," said he.

"Don't you understand what I have said?"

The lads left the room, and Mr. Woodcock was alone. Nothing could exceed the joy of the two old friends, Frank and Robert, at the prospect of the fair, and the prize which had been offered to the successful one. Edwin was not quite so joyous: he scarcely knew why. Certainly he had not so much money to spend as his companions.

Little Helen had been told by the old gentleman of his offer to the boys. It was so like him, that it gave the little girl no surprise.

"Oh, I know who will get it," cried she. "Edwin will be sure, quite sure, to get the best fairing, and then—and then—"

"Get along with you, and mind your own business," said the old gentleman. "Go and find another beggar in the lane."

"I wish I could find one half as pretty as the squirrel boy," said she to herself, as she trotted off at Mr. Woodcock's bidding. "But Edwin will have it, after all,—that I'm sure of."

The fair-day came at last.

There is no use in going through all the details of that early morning's work: the getting up before day—the careful dressing—the eager gaze through the latticed window upon the state of the sky and the atmosphere—the starting down the lane—Helen's peeping through the green old garden gate. She was as eager as the boys, for she had set her whole heart on the success of her protégé.

Edwin was behind his companions. He had had a word to say to the squirrel; and, having fed it, he too was gone.

The day was bright and lovely and all the village was astir. It was one of the great days of the year there. The fair itself was as all fairs are—gay and pleasant to look at, full of attraction and temptation. Frank and Robert wandered through the stalls, with flowers in their button-holes and clean happy faces, shining with their morning preparation. What were

they to buy? That which would accomplish the two objects-their own pleasure and fancy, and yet secure the prize. Long-very longwas each of them in deciding. Often, very often did each of them linger at different stalls, longing to buy what he personally desired. Gilt gingerbread, bright-coloured pictures, cigars—all sorts of things which attract boys growing into young men; but none would combine the two objects. Matters were settled at last to

their tolerable satisfaction. Frank,

having spent a small portion for himself, laid out five shillings on a magnificent workbox for Helen. It contained every imaginable work instrument, glittering, as the woman assured Frank, with real silver. This *must* succeed, there could be no doubt.

Robert thought and acted differently. He spent seven shillings and sixpence on himself, and then two shillings and sixpence on a gold-headed cane—real gold—which was to be given to Mr. Woodcock, "who," as Robert very

naturally said, "always uses a stick to walk with, but such a stick—a branch of white thorn, with a piece of black wood across the top for a handle. A real, genuine GOLD-headed one, must be better."

So Robert argued; and he bought the stick, and the two lads walked home together in the evening when all the fun was over, discussing freely and candidly with each other, like boys, which had the best chance of the sovereign. On one point at least the two lads were quite agreed—that the "silly squirrel boy" had no chance whatever, though neither of them had seen him all day—in fair, or lane, or field. Neither of them cared to think or wonder where he was, or what he was doing. But it was very important for little Helen to know, and for anyone at all interested in the poor wanderer by hedge and field.

Edwin had started later than the other two. He had been feeding his old and faithful friend; and besides, he and his two companions had but little sympathy with each other. But he started at last, having paid quite as much attention to his dress and appearance as had been paid by the others, and with much more effect, for he had a more knowing eye in such matters. Helen waited to say a parting word to him at the gate. Any one would have said that the young beggar boy was strikingly good-looking, and more like a gentleman than a squirrel boy.

He took his way along the beautiful lane. The deep shadows

thrown by the trees relieved the heat of the hot sun, and the hum of insects busy among the hedge flowers formed pleasant music to the traveller. As he walked along, Edwin very naturally thought about his money and his fairing; but he was quite at a loss how to proceed.

As he turned the corner of the lane into the high road, the fair broke upon his eye in all its gaiety. Numbers of men, women, and children in holiday dresses, full of joy and glee, thronged the road. Edwin became excited, and began to hurry

on, when a sad cry struck on his It was very sad, although it was low-more like a wail than a cry. The holiday-makers all pressed heedless on; if they heard the cry, what did they care for it? But Edwin had a tender heart, and was not so much taken up with the bright prospect in front as the rest were; so he stopped, with his hands in his pockets, and listened. The sad cry came again. It proceeded from an old barn by the wayside—a large old barn, with yawning timbers and a high roof. Everyone knew that barn who lived in Bushey, where the fair was being held.

The cry was so weebegone, that Edwin was unable to pass by. He stopped to look in through the crevices of the barn-door. But there was no chance of seeing anything there, for it was all dark. He tried to burst open the door, and it yielded to his pressure.

The barn seemed to be full of hay and straw—piled up in the deep shadows among the beams to the very roof. But nobody was to be seen. A

mouse ran across the floor, but all was silent.

Edwin waited for the least sound which he could catch. At first, none came; but before long a low cry again struck upon his ears from amongst the trusses of hay. The boy approached the corner from which the cry arose. "Who is there?" said he.

"I'm very hungry, and very ill," was the answer. "Oh, if you are a kind Christian, do help me! I am a traveller, and I have no home, and no food which I can take, except

the grains of corn which have dropped from the sheaves which lie here. Could you, kind Christian, give me a penny to buy a piece of bread?"

Edwin's heart was touched—touched to the quick. "Yes, that I will," said he. "I will run and buy you some myself." And, before another word was spoken, the boy ran off.

The ten shillings was in his pocket,
—the fair lay before him; but then
he thought of the poor woman—her
poverty, her sorrow, her absolute

want! The feeling heart of the poor lad urged him on, and he hurried into the fair, to purchase what he could for the sinking beggar in the barn. He had quite forgotten the prize. He laid out a shilling quickly, and with an eager heart carried back the proceeds to the barn.

He found the beggar where he had left her, for by this time his eye had become accustomed to the dim light of the barn. She ate the food eagerly, and kissed the hand of the youth. "God bless you!"

said she, "you are very kind—very.
Few are so kind."

- "Where are you going to sleep tonight?" he asked.
- "Here, in this barn," answered the poor woman, in feeble accents.
- "Here!" said Edwin, thinking of his own comfortable bed. "Here!—you cannot stay here!"
- "God bless you, ten thousand times, for that kind word! Oh, God bless you!"
- "But where are you to go?" said he. "You seem to have no home."

72 Edwin's Fairing.

There was a feeble answer—
"None!"

"Stay," said he, "till I come back. You are comfortable, are you not?"

"God bless you!" was the only reply.

Edwin went off. He thought of nothing—fair, village, companions—nothing, only to help this wretched beggar—lonely, hungry, with neither friends, nor shelter, nor food! It was very sad to him.

He did not quite know where he was going to, or what he was going

for. He had a general idea of doing something for the poor woman —that was all. As he ran along, he saw in a window the words "An Apartment to Let." He stopped and turned the money in his pocket. He thought of the sad wail which came from the barn. He knocked at the door. A kind, good-natured-looking woman opened the door. "How much," said the boy, "do you let your room for ?"

"How much—how much?" said the woman, scanning the boy from head to foot. "Well, I suppose such as you do not want a lodging. Who's it for?"

Edwin stood for a few moments in thought. "Why," said he at last, "it's for a poor beggar woman. And," he added, hurriedly, "I have the money, and I will pay—" (there was a pause)—" all I can at once."

Mrs. Callard—that was the land-lady's name—was a good-natured woman. But she smiled. "Why, my lad," said she, "take in a beggar! and you to pay! That is odd!"

The boy seemed perplexed. He

looked forward to the fair, and back to the barn. "Ma'am," said he, "here's six shillings, if that will do for a few nights."

He offered the money—six shillings—six silver shillings. Mrs. Callard looked at them, but did not touch them.

"My good boy," said she, "it's fair day. Have you forgotten?"

"Yes, ma'am—no, ma'am. I knew it; I have not forgotten."

The good woman looked at him, and smiled. "Well, but if I do take this beggar in——"

"I don't know that she's a beggar," said Edwin.

"Well, well—but she's lying in a barn. She can't sleep there night after night."

"Please, ma'am, do, pray do, take her in!"

The earnest dark eye of the boy—his beautifully intelligent countenance—his gentle manner—deeply touched the woman. "Well, but—but—you came by this honestly?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," said Edwin, simply, and quite openly, "it's mine—it's my own!"

"Yes, I'm sure it is!" said Mrs. Callard—a tear rising in her eye. "Yes, I see you're a truthful and an honest boy. But there's one thing more—who's to feed her? I'm a poor widow, and I can't; and she seems to be a beggar, so she can't. Who will? I can give her a bed for some nights; for I'm not the woman to keep a poor thing out in a barn. But she must have food; and who's to get it?" There was another pause. Edwin

There was another pause. Edwin put his hand quietly and thoughtfully into his pocket. He drew it out

again. It held the remainder of the ten shillings. He looked at it once - twice - and oftener still. Could he give it all up? Could he lose all the chance of the prize which Mr. Woodcock had offered? What should he say when he got home? What should he say to Frank and Robert? A few moments more, and he thrust the remaining money into Mrs. Callard's hand. "There!" said he-There! Will that do? Will you take her in? She's a poor beggar,

and I've been a beggar a long time.

I know what it is. Will you take it?"

"Yes," said the woman. "Go, and fetch her."

Without another word—without delay—Edwin left the door. He could now bring the beggar to a lodging. The thought pleased him. The conscious power of being able to do good to others delighted the affectionate heart of the lad.

Mrs. Callard went in, closed the door, and prepared the little bed-room. It was scarcely more than a lean-to shed. The good kindhearted soul brushed a tear from her eye as she proceeded with her work.

"Well, that is a good-hearted boy! That is a Christian—poor as he is! I'll do the best I can," she said as she dropped the money into the box where she kept her little wealth.

Edwin hurried to the barn. The drums and fiddles, tambourines and fifes, sounded in his ear as he went—all bursting from the distant fair. He reached the barn—he went

in. The beggar guessed whose footstep it was.

- "Where are you?" said Edwin.
- "Here, God bless you!" said a feeble voice from the stacks of straw.
- "Can you walk? Can you come with me a little way to a room? You can't stay here."
- "I can't pay for a room; but may every blessing come down on your young head! For young I'm sure you are, though I haven't seen you."
- "Can you walk?" said Edwin, somewhat perplexed. "No; stop!"

said he, "I will get some one to help you."

Perhaps a thought flashed over his mind of the possibility of meeting Frank or Robert, or some one he knew. He ran off; he went to his friend, Mrs. Callard—he felt at home with her now-and told his trouble. The good-natured landlady at once left the house, and brought in a neighbour—a labouring man. "This good man will go and fetch her," said she. "You stay here till they come back. Stay quiet; no one will see you." For Mrs. Callard had begun to guess the real difficulty in the lad's mind. Edwin stayed.

By this time afternoon was beginning to shed its warm rays of sunshine over the road and lane. The labouring man brought the beggar woman to the lodging, torn and tattered in dress, squalid, and thin, and wan in face, the picture of famine. Edwin looked half-frightened at what he had done. Like a boy of his age, he kept his face hidden in his hands, leaning over the chimney corner.

"This way, good man, this way,"

said Mrs. Callard; and the beggar was carried through the lower room. She was faint and weary, but the landlady was very kind. She followed the labourer and his burden to the back room; and when she ran back for some bread for her lodger, Edwin was gone, and the front room was empty.

Gone! Yes, the squirrel boy was gone—gone home, but very happy. He had hardly yet thought about the fair—about meeting Frank or Robert, Helen or Mr. Woodcock. He was very happy, with his hands in his

now empty pockets, as he wandered down the lane.

"Who is the angel who came and helped me, and brought me here? He's an angel, if ever there was one," said the poor woman to Mrs. Callard, as she lay with her pale worn face upon the pillow which the squirrel boy had got for her. "Where is he?"

"Bless you, he's gone. He's a working boy I've seen pass here sometimes, but I don't know who he is."

"A working boy! a working boy!"

said the woman; "I thought he was a gentleman. Ma'am, I don't know who he is; he and I never saw each other before. But I can't pay anything for the bed."

"It's all paid for, for some time to come—some nights," said Mrs. Callard, "all paid by the boy."

"Bless me," said the poor woman, half to herself. "Bless me! Well, that is odd. He must be an angel come down from heaven. Ah, yes," said she with a sigh, "I have no one—no one—no one. I had once—husband and child—but all are gone now."

"Have you no one?" said Mrs. Callard, "no one?"

"No," said the beggar; "I never thought to hear a kind voice again, never. I have wandered week by week, and begged my way from place to place; and why I've come here I do not know. My husband, ma'am, died abroad, beyond the seas, and I'm a lone beggar."

As she spoke, she turned her eye upon her kind landlady. It was dark, and sad; and, despite her utterly worn-out frame, and her wretched appearance, even Mrs.

Callard, with her ordinary views of life and humanity, could not but be struck with the superior look of the beggar woman.

"You be quiet," said she. "Be still, and try and sleep; it's the best thing for you, and you shall tell me your story to-morrow. Don't fret; all's paid for, lodging and food, for some days to come, and then you'll be well again. Go to sleep now."

"Angels and barns and ——" wandered the broken mind of the beggar—" angels and barns——"



MRS. CALLARD'S ADVICE.

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And Mrs. Callard, like a sensible woman, said no more, took up the candle, shut the door, and left her sad lodger to sleep as she could.

"It's an odd story," said Mrs. Callard, who had now put on her spectacles and threaded her needle, as the cat purred on the hearth, and the clock ticked, and the cricket chirped. "They are odd, both woman and boy, but he's the oddest. Bless me, I never knew the like of it—never. It is odd; but I've got my money so far."

And so ended Edwin's fairing, and

the great and long-expected fair-day at Bushey.

But the fair-day is one thing and the day after another. That was to be the day of the important decision. When Edwin got home—for he sauntered thoughtfully down the lane, full of many pleasant thoughts -he found Frank and Robert home before him. They were in bed, but not asleep. They were full of the prize, the gold sovereign of to-morrow. As Edwin entered the room the two boys stopped talking. They were puzzled about him. They could not quite make out from his manner, whether he thought he was certain to have it, or not. Edwin went up to his squirrel's cage, and saw that it had fed well on the crumbs and pieces of nuts, and the remaining drops of milk. No doubt this had been owing to Helen's care. Fido was asleep in his flannel, safe and snug. Edwin said his prayers, and then went to bed, but not to fall asleep at once, for his mind was busy on the events of the day.

At last all were asleep—candidates, judge, eager and anxious

friends, squirrel, and the poor beggar woman in the village lodging—all asleep.

Helen was up very early next morning,—so was the squirrel. But Mr. Woodcock would have his own way. He knew all were eager for the decision, and therefore he put it off.

- "Oh, Harris, Harris," cried Helen,
 "I know, I know who'll have it, I know well; that I do."
- "Now, Miss Helen," said Harris,
 "do be quiet. I can't do your hair a
 bit, and you'll be going down to
 grandfather like anything."

"What's anything, old Harris?" said Helen, pulling away. "Do make haste, I want to go."

And at last she went. But still the time had not come. It was the middle of the day before the old gentleman summoned the party for the decision on the fairings. Helen was there, of course. She was sure Edwin would be the winner—quite sure. Frank and Robert were in much doubt. The old gentleman went on drawing, and kept his hat on, as if nothing had happened, or was going to happen. Helen fidgeted

bought."

herself to death by his side, looking anxiously over his shoulder. The boys waited.

"Hollo, boys!" said Mr. Woodcock, looking up. "What do you want?"

"The prize, sir," answered more than one voice.

"Oh yes; ay, the prize for the best fairing. Then, there it is," said he, throwing the pound on the table. "I'll settle who is to take it up. Let us see what each of you has

Frank pulled his front lock of hair, and produced his work-box, blazing in red leather, gold and silver—scissors, thimbles, tweezers. It looked beautiful; Helen's eyes were fixed upon it.

"What can grandpapa do with a work-box!" said she.

"It's for you, Miss Helen," said the boy, colouring, but looking very happy. He was a good-looking boy, though he had reddish hair and freckles. His blue eyes sparkled with pleasure, as he placed his fairing in Mr. Woodcock's hands.

Helen blushed deeply. But to tell the real truth she did not want the work-box, for that would have been the same as wishing that Edwin should not have the pound. There stood the work-box, however. Robert came forward with the gold-headed stick,—real gold, he had been assured.

"It's for you, sir," said he, placing it in Mr. Woodcock's hands.

It was evident that it would be hard work to decide between these two. There was a pause. Helen was eager. Edwin stood pale and silent.

"Well, sir," said the old gentleman, "and where's yours?"

- "Please, sir, I have none," said Edwin in a low tremulous voice.
- "None!" said the master; "then what did you buy?"
 - "Nothing, sir," said the boy.
- "Bought nothing at the fair! nothing! Then you have kept the money which I gave you. But, young man, remember I gave it you to spend, not to keep."
- "Sir, I have not kept it," said Edwin.
- "Not spent it, and not kept it. Then where is it? Have you lost it?"

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"No, sir, indeed I have not; indeed, do believe me. But I cannot—I do not want to tell just now: not just now—I will in a few days, sir."

Edwin looked very pale and trembled slightly. The two other boys smiled exultingly to each other. Helen's eyes were fixed on her hero, her finger on her lip, and her cheek losing colour.

"I never knew that boy tell me a lie before; I thought his face was honest. But I see one can't trust beggars."

The colour rose into the wanderer's

cheeks; his large dark eye flashed for a moment, and his whole face expressed a feeling which none of them had seen in it before.

"You may trust me, sir," said Edwin, "beggar though I was till you took me by the hand. I have told no lie, none, sir; I have spoken the downright truth. I only beg of you to give me a few days more. That's all."

"You're an insolent, independent vagabond, to deceive me after I have done so much for you. Go along with you, and for the future take

example by these two lads, who are truthful and trustworthy. Go, sir."

Helen's lip quivered. Frank and Robert laughed right out. Mr. Woodcock looked angry. Edwin's face showed that he was undergoing strong emotion. He fell on his knees, and while the tears, which he did not check, ran down his pallid face, he joined his hands, and cried, "Sir. sir. I have not deceived you.

and you shall know all very soon; do believe me, do forgive me, that is all I ask."

The old gentleman said nothing.

He was fairly puzzled. Edwin rose and left the room, while Helen burst out crying, and hid her face in her hands behind her grandfather's chair.

"There, boy," said Mr. Woodcock at last, throwing the sovereign to Frank. "You are both of you good fellows, and kind-hearted; but I think the workbox will be more useful than the walking stick. Helen, say 'thank you.'"

"Thank you," said Helen through her tears.

"Thank you, sir," said the boys.

"You may have a holiday for the

rest of the day. As for that vagabond fellow—" The boys were gone.

"Oh grandfather, grandfather," cried Helen, "do not call Edwin that; I am sure—quite sure—there is some good reason for what he has done; do be kind to him."

"Get along, you little hussy, and mind your own business," said Mr. Woodcock, while he went on with his drawing; and Helen ran to pour out her griefs to Harris.

Edwin went up to his room; he knelt down and prayed, prayed earnestly. He had been taught from

his childhood to go to God in trouble; and he often prayed. Had he done right or wrong? "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: naked, and ye clothed me: a stranger, and ve took me in." Yes, those words came with comfort to his soul. He felt he had done right. He was at rest. He went and talked to his squirrel. Fido ran out as his young master opened the cage door, and took refuge in his breast. Edwin stroked his smooth back and felt that he loved his little companion better than ever. We do cling

wonderfully to the companion of our days of sorrow, when we are ourselves lonely, yes even though it be but a squirrel.

The permission for a holiday for the rest of the day was of course extended to all the three boys. So Edwin, putting Fido back in his cage, again took his way to Mrs. Callard's house. He was a thoughtful, loving boy, and had, what many youths of his age have, a delight in feeling that he was of importance to some one.

All was going on well. The poor beggar was comfortable. She had

been talking to Mrs. Callard about "the angel boy," and wondering where he could have come from.

"God Almighty must have sent him," said she, "and yet he seemed of the working class—how did he get the money?"

"The Lord alone knows," said the good-natured landlady. "I had a boy of my own once, but he wasn't like that."

Edwin had not seen the poor vagabond since she came. She was too ill to see anyone except Mrs. Callard yet. But Edwin was very happy

at hearing that she was so comfortable.

Poor boy, when he returned home he found he was in disgrace. The old gentleman spoke roughly to him. The two lads laughed at him and whispered to each other. Grindle pushed him about when he came for his dinner, and gave him the end of the stalk of the cabbage. while she gave the other boys the centre and the leaves. Even Harris once ventured to say that she doubted whether he was not a fool after all; but Helen got into a violent passion, and Harris held her tongue. Fido loved him—no doubt of that. So days wore on, and Edwin was fairly sent to coventry by nearly all.

But more trouble awaited him, and sore trouble. He regularly paid his daily visit to Mrs. Callard's, and now he went in to read the Bible aloud to the woman in the little back lean-to, where the curtain hung over the window. He was shy naturally, so he did not explain what he read, but when he had done returned home. One of those evenings, not long after the fair

day, Mrs. Callard said—"My lad, the money's been done these three days, and I can't afford to pay any more myself, for I'm a poor woman, and I've already paid more than I ought. But I did not like to speak; and the poor thing is not fit to move yet. But I am afraid she will have to go."

The boy's face fell. "What is to be done?" said he. "I don't know, for I have no more money." (He had already given his little savings of pocket-money, in addition to the ten shillings.) "What is to

be done? How long will it be before she will be able to move?"

"It will take a good pound's worth more for that!" was the answer.

"A pound's worth more!" said the poor fellow to himself; "how am I to get that? I am sure I don't know."

He sauntered down the lane, thinking deeply, but he could fix on nothing. Suddenly he stopped. "I have thought of something. He is a good-natured old man, so I will ask him to advance me a pound of my weekly money." But soon his face fell again. "He has not spoken to me

since the fair day." His heart misgave him. "And if he should give me the money, how am I to buy food for Fido? Perhaps I might do it through Miss Helen."

He thought over this through the waking minutes of the night. Nor did he forget to carry his difficulty to God.

And he did ask Helen the next morning. The little girl flew to the octagon, full of hope, and made her request.

"Lend him a pound, advance him a pound!" cried the old gentleman,

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HELEN'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

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in dismay. "What, that vagabond! No, that I won't. Go along! Lend him a pound, indeed!"

Poor Helen retired very sad, and much less quickly than she came.

Mr. Woodcock put down his pen.

"There is something strange about that boy," said he to himself. "I can't make him out at all. If ever a boy's face and manner and conduct were in his favour, it's that lad's. I do not really think I could have been mistaken in him. But I will put him to a test, and see if I can make him out."

He rang the bell.

"Send in Edwin, the garden boy," said he.

Presently Edwin came.

"So, sir, you want me to lend you a pound? A pretty request! Do you think I shall do it?"

"I do not know, sir," was the reply, "I wish you would—I hope you will."

"What is it for?" said Mr. Wood-cock, with a searching glance.

Edwin scarcely knew which way to interpret the old man's manner, and cast his eyes on the ground. "Please, sir, do not ask me. Do trust me; do trust me," he said, beseechingly, as he raised his eyes, and looked full at his master.

There was a minute's pause.

"Come again to me to-morrow morning at nine."

Then there was hope, anyhow.

"I will test him," said Mr. Wood-cock.

Edwin went to his work full of hope, and he worked well. When the morning's work was over, the boys went up to their room, for they had always to prepare for their dinner,

as they dined in the kitchen. Though Grindle was never clean herself, excepting on Sundays between three and five—and then she always sat near the fire, a clean handkerchief and a Bible in her hand, turned the wrong side upward—she was very particular about "these garden boys" being clean for dinner. So they were always clean.

All through the day Edwin was full of hope, and in the evening he went up to look at Fido, while the two other boys went out. The faithful creature knew the step of its master, and ran out of its little chamber to meet his finger. Edwin took it out of its cage. There was nothing which the squirrel liked better than that.

Night came, and the three boys went to bed. Edwin did not fall asleep at once, although the other three did—the two boys and the squirrel. He was awake, but very happy. He had prayed before he went to rest: he had read those beautiful verses in the Gospel of St. Matthew: "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: a stranger,

and ye took me in." Yes! those words were indeed full of comfort to the wanderer, who lav now on a home-pillow. His thoughts were consoling, because he felt that he had been trying to do that blessed work. Yes, dear boy, you had been trying to do it, as but few at your age and in your circumstances would have done. And there, at last, you lie asleep, quiet and peaceful. And Edwin had happy dreams dreams about the beggar woman, and dreams about the companion of his daily journey. Very happy dreams

they were. But, Edwin, you must not think that all the work is to be so easily done. I know you have read the words of Jesus. and you have prayed to Him, and wish to do His will; and you went to sleep with those feelings. But the work, the real work is not yet done; you think it is,-but it is not. If you love Him, and give yourself to Him in prayer, do not think that He will let you do a work of sacrifice for His dear sake, unless you feel the real, sharp edge of the cross. The cross is not quite so com-

fortable, and you must find that out. You hope that by giving up a little pleasure, or some holiday, or by buying and wearing a black fustian instead of a cloth coat, or a striped calico handkerchief instead of a silk one, and giving your savings to help a poor beggar, that you have done your work. No, not yet, Edwin, not There is a pleasure, a real, natural pleasure, in doing good to others, especially in youths like you. But the work must be "finished" by the cross. There is some sharpness for you yet, poor wanderer!

And Edwin woke—woke from happy dreams and happy thoughts, and went out to his work.

At the appointed time he went to Mr. Woodcock.

"Here is Edwin, the garden boy, sir."

"Send him in," was the answer.

The boy stood bright and happy before him, and full of hope.

"Well, sir, and you want—what? Oh, yes, I remember—a pound. You wanted to borrow a pound, did you not?" said the old gentleman.

"No, sir," said Edwin. "I hoped

you would advance me one pound out of my weekly pay."

"Well, that means that I should lend you a pound,—eh?"

"No, sir, if you please, give it me in advance."

"I never do lend, or give in advance. It is a plan I do not approve of, and I never did. You will want money for clothes, and I do not know what, some day soon, and then where is your money? No, no; I cannot lend or advance anything."

Poor Edwin! his face fell; his art sank within him.

"I will tell you what I will do, though," said Mr. Woodcock.

Edwin looked up.

- "I object to boys borrowing money, or having it advanced; but I will give you an easy chance of earning it."
- "Earning it!" said the youth, whose whole heart was full of his mission. "Earning it!"
- "Yes," said Mr. Woodcock. "I said that, and you may earn this sovereign, but I will not lend it you."
 - "How, sir?" said the boy.

"Well," said his master, "a young lady was here the other day—a friend of your friend Miss Helenand as you were at work in the garden, Miss Helen sent Harris to bring your little squirrel to show Lady Mary. You know Miss Helen is proud of the squirrel. Well, Lady Mary took such a fancy for it, that she said. 'It is one of the finest squirrels I ever saw. I would give a pound for one like it.' Although Lady Mary knows a vast deal about squirrels, and so forth, she said, 'I never saw one like that,"

Edwin's heart again began to sink, but he stood still without speaking.

"So you may sell your squirrel to the lady, and the pound will be your own; not lent, nor advanced, but honestly got. What do you say to that?"

There was a minute's silence. Edwin's eyes were fixed on the ground. He looked up after a little.

"Fido, the squirrel, sir? Do you mean that?"

: "Yes," was the answer. "What

should I mean? What's Fido?—I mean the squirrel."

There was again silence.

"Well, I can't wait," said Mr. Woodcock. "What will you do? I cannot lend or advance you the money; and to sell the squirrel is your only chance, if you do really

and honestly want it."

The squirrel! The boy looked up at his master, and, with a voice almost choking, said, "Will you give me—may I tell you by-and-by?"

That was all, and that was enough;

for Edwin could at that moment speak no more.

"Yes—yes—you may come this evening, or you may come to-morrow, about the squirrel and the pound."

The wanderer could say no more. He bowed to Mr. Woodcock, and left the room.

"I cannot make that boy out," said Mr. Woodcock, "There is more in him than I see. But he shall not have the pound until I have the squirrel." And he went on drawing.

The boy went at once to his work, and he worked well and hard that day. He had to trim up that side path of the garden, fringed with flower-beds, which ran along the hedge skirting the lane. But while he raked the beds, and threw the weeds of the gravel-walk into the wheelbarrow, and cut the edges of the grass which hung over the flowerbeds, his mind was hard at work. Yes, hard! What was to be done about the squirrel? Thought after thought shot quickly through his head. At one time there came the blessed

words, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in;" "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these. ye have done it unto me;" "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And the Blessed Figure. which showed the great example of giving up all for us, also came before him. "Yes," said he to himself. "Fido must go! The poor woman must have the means to stay till she is able to go. Yes—" And he leant upon his spade.

"But what claim has that beggar on you? She has nothing to do with you—she may be an impostor. And what have you to do with her?" a voice seemed to say.

"Well, I do not see," said the young gardener, as he raked over the same piece of earth the second time—"I do not see what I have to do with her." So Fido was to stay.

"Well," he thought, "but that poor woman will never get to her home—will have, perhaps, to go to the workhouse—and may die! And, when you have done so much for her already, will you allow this, Edwin?"

"No, no! that cannot be! That would be wrong!"

"But, then, poor wanderer, will you let the little companion of night and day, who earned so much of your daily bread—who was always so faithful to you—will you let it go away, perhaps to be neglected, possibly to be starved?"

"Oh, no, I cannot!"

"But the good young lady who will buy it will feed it well—ay, perhaps far better than you could ever do."

"Yes, yes—very true." And Ed-

win leant a long time upon the top of his spade. He thought—he did more than think, he resolved. "Yes, it must go! it must go!" And he worked again a little while, and the bell rang for dinner.

He went to Harris—for she was a kind of friend still—and said that he felt unwell, and asked if he might stay away from dinner, and go to his room. Harris gave him leave, and he went up stairs. He went to the cage, and there was the little animal nibbling a nut which it held in its

two paws, with its tiny ears erect, and its black, round, piercing eyes which seemed to look on all sides. But it leapt from its perch and through the wire door, which Edwin had opened, and jumped at once into his bosom, as it had always done. The boy looked at it, stroked its bushy tail, and put it back. thought over all that had passed through his mind since the morning. He did more. He went out again to his work, and worked well. His mind was made up. Only one thing he said to himself that afternoon-

"I will put the towel over him."
That was all.

Yes, "Put the towel over him"—that is the true word. When you have made up your mind to give up anything—be it what it may—made up your mind, mark you, because you think it right to give it up—right in the sight of God—then give it up! Do not hesitate—do not look back, like Lot's wife—do not stand and gaze. Put the towel over it, and take it away!

And the garden-boy went upstairs. He was alone: it was tea-time, but as Harris's permission extended to this meal too, he did not go to tea, but went to his room. He did not look at Fido—he went straight to the towel, and, with the towel in his hand, he turned to the cage. He put the towel over it,—and the work was done.

Edwin was a boy of great self-control, although with his Italian blood he had many passionate and deeply affectionate feelings, which those around him in England could not understand. He had nevertheless a strong power of will when it

"Oh, yes—the squirrel. Then you will sell it—will you?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy, not moving.

"Put it down; and there's the sovereign for you."

Mr. Woodcock threw the pound upon the table, and Edwin put down the cage upon the chair. He thanked his master, bowed, and left the room.

The sovereign—the golden sovereign—was in his hand! He looked at it round and round, as he went out into the dim evening light. Yes,

there was the real money! clasped it in his damp hand. It was still an hour or two before he must be at home again. went to the gate—the green trelliswork gate, and walked smartly up the lane, his hands plunged into his pockets, his cap over his forehead. He looked neither to the right hand nor the left; for the one bank or the other might have brought thoughts and memories which he wished and was determined to avoid. He turned into the high road, and soon reached Mrs. Callard's.

"There it is!" said Edwin, placing the sovereign in her hand, his face flushed with the momentary excitement.

"Why, how have you got it this time?" said she, amazed. "You are but a working boy."

"You are right," said he. "But I have got it, and honestly."

"That I am sure of by your face."

"I will not stay to read to the poor woman to-night," said he. "I must be home. I will come again to-morrow. Good night, Mrs. Callard!"

"Good night!" said she. And the door closed.

The landlady looked at the money, and wondered. "This will keep her well," said she to herself, "till she's able to go; and if it doesn't, I'll manage. But, bless my heart! what a boy it is! What is he made of? Well, flesh and blood, I suppose. But I never saw the like of him—never! However, it's no business of mine."

And Edwin went home, and to bed. That night was not quite like last night—a strong feeling of pleasure had filled his mind as he walked

home. But it was softened and chastened before he got there. When he entered his room all was silent. The other two boys had not yet come in. Edwin tried, wished, longed to sleep, but, somehow or other, he could not. He had been used to the frequent movements of the squirrel at the foot of the bed. But now there were none. At last, he fell asleep.

He had many dreams that night. He dreamt of Fido and himself wandering about on high roads and lanes, through village streets and town thoroughfares. Then of a gate which led up to a noble mansion, at which gay and high-born children laughed and sported. And then how, when they saw the Italian and his squirrel coming along the lane, they all stopped their play and gathered round Fido; and how the little animal played his gambols, ran up the tree and down again at Edwin's call; and how delighted the children were, and brought food for the squirrel, and pence for the boy. And then he dreamt of some one all alone in the night, wandering down

a lane, looking for something in the hedge, which he could not see, and he looked so pale and sad against the dark night-sky; and then he came to an old barn and lay down with his head against the door to sleep in his loneliness. And Edwin He turned on his pillow. woke. The other two boys were snoring. But the other side of the pillow gave him no freedom from dreams that night. Next he saw a poor beggar woman, ragged, hungry, and ill, and a youth came up to her, lifted her up and gave her food; and she said:

"God bless you;" and in his dream Edwin strove to reach the two figures and touch them, but he could not—they were far away in the moonlight. He beckoned them to stop—but they were gone—and he woke.

He rose early, and went to his work. He had had a struggle, but he had conquered.

No, reader, you are wrong. There was nothing childish, or what people call sentimental, in this boy, though he did love a squirrel, or because he thought the squirrel loved him.

Many a man has loved his dog,

and has known his dog loved him, even to death. Bethgellart has its tale to tell; and that poor prisoner, whose mournful plaint is expressed in well-known music, loved the tiny weed which grew up between the stones of his prison-yard; and when they destroyed it he died. Yes, men -noble men, have loved dogs and weeds. Then why not Edwin love his squirrel? On the cold field of Alma, where the wounded and dead lay after a nobly fought day, a Russian boy still held in his chilling bosom the kitten he had brought

from his mother's home. And at the stern and terrible Redan, the dog who charged with the forlorn hope, leapt above the outwork to bring back the cap which his master had flung before him to encourage his men to the terrible attack, and dropped it, as he fell dead at the young officer's feet. And that young officer, amid the storm of bullets, shed a tear over the faithful leader of the forlorn hope on the Redan. Then why may the poor wanderer not shed or suppress a tear over the faithful companion of his weal and woe?

But it was all over now, and Edwin worked as usual.

It was a bright, lovely day. Two persons passed near Edwin that early morning, for he was working beside the green trellis-work gate. The first was the coachman, who was conveying a large parcel, covered with a cloth, to Lady Mary Capel's. Edwin did not think it well to look again. It was gone. Where was the use of thinking of anything, but the nasturtiums and the young dahlias? And then came the other passer-by—Mr. Woodcock; for he had also got up

early that morning, and as he went into his octagon he said to himself, "I will go, before an hour's over, and find out what that boy is after, for I cannot make him out." So Mr. Woodcock started forth, having gathered from one of the men employed on the estate which way it was that Edwin usually took.

Edwin saw him go. His master took no notice of him, but went on; he turned down the lane, and into the high road, and on to the village.

When he reached Mrs. Callard's

door, it was opened by herself. Mr. Woodcock, with his low, broad-brimmed hat, and his wide, old-fashioned coat, so seldom walked into the village, that he was not well known; and the landlady did not recognise him at first.

"I say, madam," said he, "does any lad of mine ever come to your house, neglecting his work in my garden?"

"Bless my heart alive!" said Mrs. Callard, wiping her forehead with her apron, "Why, sure enough, it's old Mr. Woodcock."

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TALLERY'S ADDINGT.

- "Let me in!" said he.
- "Deary me!" cried the landlady, "why, sir, I'm all of a dirt."
- "I don't mind the dirt," said he; "let me in."

Now this was the last thing in the world which Mrs. Callard wished him to say. She did not mean that she was really dirty. But Mr. Woodcock's acceptance of the fact upset his stout friend.

"I'm quite as clean as my neighbours, sir, and tidier than most of them."

By this time her visitor was in the room; but to her still greater offence he would not sit down.

- "About this boy," said he; "I'm in a hurry."
- "Well, sir—lawk-a-day, how warm it is!" said she, hoping, under cover of this delay, to settle what on earth she was to say about Edwin. "Well, sir, to be sure, to speak the truth, for I wouldn't tell a lie——"
- "Who cares about your telling lies? That's not the point. Quick, I'm in a hurry."
 - "But I don't tell lies—who says I

do?" broke in Mrs. Callard, indignantly.

- "Will you go on?"
- "Well, sir, there is a lad, a tall lad, who does come here, and they say as how he works for your lord-ship."
- "I'm not a lord!" said Mr. Wood-cock. "Do go on, now."
 - "Well, he comes-"
- "What for?" was the laconic rejoinder.
- "Deary me, what shall I say?" said the sorely perplexed landlady to herself. "You won't hurt him,

sir; you won't discharge him if I tell you?"

"Will you go on?"

"Well, sir, you remember last fair-day. It was then that a tall, decent dressed lad came running here all out of breath. You know he was dressed all nice to go to the fair, as I suppose, and, says he to me, 'Missis, there is a poor lone beggar in a barn down below, who's starved with hunger and looks so ill, I think she's dying. Will you take her in for a night or two?' I saw the boy had a feeling heart; so says I to him, 'But I'm a

lone woman, and I can't take her in for nothing.' Then says the boy, 'Here's ten shillings, ma'am, if that'll do. I should like to save the poor thing's life.' 'Well,' says I, 'think what you are a-doing of, my boy,' for I thought as how it might be his fairing-money. So, says he, 'How long will it last, ma'am?' He was very civil-spoken; so I said, 'There are six shillings for lodging, and four for board; and that'll do for some days to come.' So he came to see how she was going on at his leisure hours; and sometimes he

would stay to read aloud to her. He's a wonderful good scholar, sir. Then, two days ago, I told him the money was out and I could keep her no longer. He asked how long it would take to get her well enough to go to her home; though, for that matter, home she has none. says, 'A pound's worth.' Well, bless you, sir, what does the boy do but brings me a whole pound, a whole real golden pound, and puts it into my hand and says, as civil as civil could be, 'Here, Mrs. Callard, here is the pound.' And here it is,

sir, just as he gave it me last evening, and there's the whole honest truth."

- "How did the fellow get so much money?" said Mr. Woodcock. "He must have stolen it."
- "Oh, sir! stole it—stole it!" cried Mrs. Callard. "He never stole a thing in his life," added she, indignantly; "look at his face, he's an honest boy."
- "How do you know?" said the old gentleman. "How could a boy like that, who has no father or mother, get so much money?"
- "No father nor mother!" cried Mrs. Callard. "Well, he never told

me that. Bless the boy—an orphan, and yet to be like that!"

- "Where is this beggar?" said Mr. Woodcock.
- "In there, sir," said she; "in the lean-to."
- "Well, I don't want to see her; vagabonds ought to be taken up by the police." And Mr. Woodcock turned away.
- "Pray, pray, sir, don't!" cried Mrs. Callard; but the gentleman was out of hearing.

It was now between eleven and twelve, as Mr. Woodcock turned in at his own gate. Edwin was going on silently and steadily at his work. He touched his cap to the master as he passed. Mr. Woodcock nodded to him.

"You are making the border look nice, Edwin," said he.

"Thank you, sir," said the boy, colouring, as Mr. Woodcock passed on.

It was hardly ever known by the boys that he stopped to speak to them in that way, or to call them by their Christian names.

Mr. Woodcock had some little

arrangements to make with Grindle; and then, when the servants' dinner was over, he rung the bell.

"Tell Edwin, the garden-boy, to come to me," said he.

"Yes, sir," said the servant.

"What a fuss is made about that vagabond of a garden-boy," said he to himself.

Edwin got ready, and came.

"Here, boy," said Mr. Woodcock;

"I want you to carry a basket for me. Bring it after me."

"There are two, sir," said the boy.

"Shall I take both?"

"No; I can carry one, though I am not so young as you are."

And so the two set out, Mr. Woodcock with one basket, and Edwin following with the other.

"What upon earth is he going to do?" said the boy to himself.

They turned down the lane, passed the bank where Edwin and Fido were when Helen first saw them, went on to the high road, and down the village. There was nothing very odd in all this, but still Edwin wondered. The old gentleman said "Bring the basket in, boy," said Mr. Woodcock, as Mrs. Callard opened the door.

Edwin did as he was told, and the door closed behind him.

"Where is this woman?" said Mr. Woodcock.

Mrs. Callard glanced anxiously at Edwin, who looked on the ground, pale as death.

- "This way, sir, through the leanto door," said she, at length.
- "Bring that basket in, Edwin," said Mr. Woodcock.

And Edwin, trembling, followed, Mrs. Callard going first. The bed was against the wall, with a little curtained window at its side. The roof was sloping; a chair and table were under the slope, and a box stood at the end of the bed, on which Edwin sat when he read to the poor outcast. To-day the curtain was lifted off the window, and there was more light. The bed was neatly

arranged, and very clean. The poor woman for the first time was sitting propped up by the pillows. She was dressed in Mrs. Callard's nicest and best things. But by far the most striking thing was her own appearance. Her face was very pale and sunken, but remarkable for its expression of refinement and softness. Her eyes were blue, with long dark lashes; her hair was neatly and carefully braided over her forehead; and her hands, which were thin and white, did not by any means look like those of a common beggar. The curtain of

the bed was slightly drawn back, so that the light fell on her face. Edwin had never before rightly seen the poor creature he had rescued from death. The room was darker, and he was shy, and had read on, and then slipped away. Mrs. Callard went up close to the pillow to say who Mr Woodcock was. Mr. Woodcock stood in the middle of the room, and Edwin remained at the foot of the bed. If any one had been there to judge, the boy never appeared to better advantage. His face was singularly beautiful, and his figure tall

though slim for his age; but his expression was subdued. He had a certain sadness on his mind. Yes, Edwin,—the Cross must press heavily in order to do its work.

"Well, my good woman," began Mr. Woodcock, "what's your story? How came you to be a vagabond? You know it's against the law."

Edwin felt anxious, and Mrs. Callard fidgeted, but the woman looked calm.

"I had no wish to be a vagabond, sir," she said, in a low and subdued voice, indicating great bodily weakness. "It was no choice of mine."

"But you must have been a beggar, too," he said.

A slight colour passed over her face, as she said, "I have begged, sir; I couldn't help it, I did my best to avoid it. I do not know whether it was a false pride or not, but I have dragged on many a weary, hungry hour without doing it. The day when that angel boy found me," said she, fixing her eye on Edwin, "I had travelled many a long mile without food,

There was a pause. Edwin's eyes were cast down on the floor, and the colour came into his face. The eyes of the beggar were fixed upon him, as he stood there at the foot of the bed. She had not seen him so well before.

"Well," said Mr. Woodcock, "I have brought you plenty of food in these baskets, as I heard you were ill, and your good landlady told me

all about you to-day. How have you lived all this time?"

The beggar again cast her eyes on Edwin.

"Well, well," said the old man, "I know all about that. But, my good woman, tell me how you came to this state, for you look above it."

The poor woman turned her eyes on Mr. Woodcock.

"Sir," said she, "you have been very kind to me, in bringing all these nourishing things. I have reason to thank God that after all my wanderings I came here; for

I have indeed found friends such as no beggar could expect." And as she spoke, she turned towards Edwin with a look of gratitude. "But, sir," she continued, turning to Mr. Woodcock again, "you have called me a vagabond and a beggar; and in some respects so I was. But if you will let me, I will tell you something of my history, that you may not think ill of me. That is, I will do so as well as my strength will permit. I was born, sir, to a respectable station in life. My father and mother were well-to-do, with a shop and a comfortable home. They were God-fearing people, and gave me a fair education, and brought me up religiously. When my father died, though my mother was left pretty well off, I thought it my duty to relieve her of the burden of supporting me. I took a place as nursery governess in a family. One little girl, named Alice, was particularly confided to me, and I had a great deal to do with bringing her up. She became very fond of me, and I of her. At length she grew delicate, and the family were ordered to Italy. We went to Mentone, and

spent two winters there. Miss Alice grew rapidly worse, and we all saw she would not live. She was a sweet young lady, and used to like me to talk to her and read to her about the other world for hours together. The lady wished me to cease to be nursery governess to the children, and to act only as maid to Miss Alice, and attend wholly to all her wants. I gladly did so till Miss Alice's death, after which I stayed a little while longer with the family. At length, however, I was sought in marriage by a young Italian—a

Savoyard—who had been in the army. I accepted him, and we lived most happily together. He was a good man and a good husband. We had one child—a boy. Oh, how beautiful that boy was, -my precious, precious child!" She wiped the fast falling tears from her eyes. "My husband was wrapped up in that child. He would carry him for hours among the beautiful vineyards and valleys of that lovely land, and sing him the songs of his own Savoy. When our child was about two years and a half old my husband died.

I was left alone, and I again went into an English family. I now found that I could not see after my child as I would like to do, and I knew England would be better for him, both for health and education. I had one only sister who lived in England. She agreed to take my child, and keep him till I returned home. A kind English family offered to take charge of him to England, and I parted with him. Oh, how often have I in the work of day and the dreams of night seen him before me, with his father's large,

dark, Italian eyes, and his own pretty, happy, childish tricks. But I let him go, sweet boy. I have never seen him since, and I fear never shall now. till, please God, we meet before the throne on high. I heard often of him from my sister, and he was well and thriving. But one day a sad letter came. My sister had died suddenly, and my child was left among strangers, and had been taken to the workhouse. He was yet but a little child. He soon died there, and I had a letter containing the account of his death. One neighbour of my sister's

was very kind to him, and used to go to see him.

"I had now nothing left to care for in England, and as I was much attached to the family with whom I was, and as they wished me to remain, I stayed with them for a few years. At length the wish seized me to come to England. There were, indeed, only my child's and my sister's graves to look at, and that of my dear parents; but I thought I might be able, with what I had saved, to begin some way of living, and at last die in my native land. But I lost my all. A severe

illness seized me at Southampton. I was in lodgings, but the people were bad and robbed me, and I was cast adrift on the world.

"I knew not where to go. I was poor, and ill, and weak; but I was determined to find traces of my child. I wandered from Southampton, and found my way from place to place, till I reached my native village. I found my sister's grave. There was no difficulty there; the grave was green and well kept, for many knew her. But it was in vain that I tried to discover where the dear

dust of my child was laid. The people at the workhouse could not guide me; they knew nothing about it. It does not matter much, however, now; he is safe and happy, and I have only to follow him. And then, if God will let me in, I shall be with all I have loved on earth in that land where no beggars are. I have walked, sir, by day and by night, and have tried to keep from begging. I have longed to have a home of my own again. It was mere accident, sir, that I wandered here in my journeys. Worn out with fatigue, and faint with hunger, I got into a barn, and lay down upon the hay to rest. I was so tired and hungry. I may have cried out for help. I hardly knew it. But that kind boy -may the Almighty bless him for ever!—he came into the barn, and brought me here—why, I do not know. It was put into his heart; and here, sir, I am, getting better every day, under the care of my landlady; and may the Lord bless you all for your kindness!"

As she came near the end of her tale, Edwin, whose eyes had been

intently fixed upon her throughout, leant against the post of the bed, his head resting on his arm. He had become paler than ever.

As the poor beggar finished, he unbuttoned his waistcoat and his shirt, and drew out a piece of packthread, to the end of which a little metal box was fastened. He held it in his hand; and, at the poor wanderer's concluding words, he began to draw nearer her pillow. Trembling and pale, the boy approached the poor creature whom he had saved from death.

Her tale was done: but as she had finished it, she had fixed her eye on the lad. She put out her hand, as if to beckon him, but had not enough strength to do it. She tried to stretch it out to draw aside the curtain of her bed; even in that effort she failed. But the beggar boy was now close by her side. He had opened the little box, and had placed it in the wanderer's She looked at the boy and hand. then at the metal box. There was one wild cry of joy, and the mother and her only child wept upon each other's breast.

"Mother, mother! have I found you at last?"

"My boy, my child—my angel boy!"

Mr. Woodcock turned round. Tears were falling from his eyes; but as he had never been known to shed them before, he was determined no one should see him do it now. As for Mrs. Callard, she threw her apron over her face, and fairly burst into tears. Mr. Woodcock went out, beckoning to the landlady, who reluctantly followed him, into the next room. The mother and her boy were left

alone together. Long and interesting was the tale of their wanderings. When it was over, Mr. Woodcock threw two sovereigns on the table. "Let her want for nothing," said he, "till I return. But tell the boy he need not come home till night. God bless him!" said the kind-hearted old man, as he left.

Mrs. Callard held her apron to her eyes with one hand, and with the other she took the two sovereigns. The tears still shone brightly upon her cheek, and that house was left for a while the home of happy thoughts.

"Holloa, Helen, you little gossip, come here," cried Mr. Woodcock, when he returned home.

Helen, who was hard at work, with a basket in her hand, weeding, which she loved to do, immediately ran after her grandfather.

- "Send Harris to me directly," said he.
- "Yes, grandpapa," and off she went.
 - "Stop, stop, you little hussy,"

cried he. "When Harris has left me, you come to me."

"Yes, grandpapa," and away she went again.

Harris came and went, and Helen, eager for news, was immediately in her grandfather's room. "Oh, young lady," said he, "I want you to go with Harris to see Edwin's mother; she's ill."

- "Edwin's mother!" said Helen.

 "Edwin's mother!—grandfather, do
 go on with your drawing; you are
 talking nonsense."
- "Hold your tongue, you little hussy."

Helen, with her lips apart, and standing astonished, again said, "Edwin's mother! Grandpapa, what do you mean?"

"Get along," said he, "and find Harris."

"But—but—is it true?—really true?"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Woodcock.

" Go."

"Well," said the little lingering girl, "if she is alive (though I know she's dead), she is the Pope's wife, grandpapa; is she not? The Pope's wife!" "Get along, will you?" said her grandfather. "Go with Harris. The Pope's wife!"

Away went Helen, pale and crimson, alternately. She found Harris with her bonnet on.

- "Harris, Harris, come; don't stop
 —don't stop a minute. I'm going to
 the Pope."
- "To whom?" said Harris, in utter wonderment. "The Pope?"
- "Yes, yes. Oh never mind; do come, that's all."

Harris looked very much astonished. But Helen having dashed

off, Harris must needs follow. Only, Harris walked slowly.

Helen, meantime, had been twice to the gate and back again. The second time she met Harris. "Oh, never mind," said she. "It's only the Pope's wife. Come along."

"The Pope's wife," said Harris to herself. "Well, then, we are safe." And they set off—at least Harris did, for Helen was already far down the lane.

Mrs. Callard's house was reached, and Helen was standing panting at the door till Harris arrived. It was opened by Mrs. Callard. Helen rushed in; but Harris quietly walked in. She had a basket with her containing some clothing for the poor woman.

- "May Miss Helen see her?" said Harris.
- "Oh, I should so like to do so," cried Helen.
- "I will go in and tell her," said Mrs. Callard, and in she went.

The door opened, and Edwin came in. Never did he look so bright or happy. His mother had nicely arranged his hair,—his rich,

luxuriant hair. His eyes were bright, and more full of feeling than ever. Helen started.

"Will you come and see mother, Miss Helen?" said the boy.

"Oh yes, yes, directly," and she had almost seized the fastening of the door.

"Thank you, Miss Helen; thank you very much. I will go and tell my mother."

Edwin went, and Helen followed. The boy leant over his mother, and told her who Helen was. The happy woman rose from her pillow. Helen burst into tears, and then laughed with happy laughter. The little girl suggested a hundred plans. She would come and read to her every day. She would bring food three times a day. She would bring clothing once a week—and—and—

"Come, Miss Helen, come away," said Harris; "you will tire the poor woman."

"She's not a poor woman, not a bit! I'll be back in an hour," said she, looking at Edwin; and notwithstanding the frowns of Harris, the

independent young lady ran home, as fast as she had come.

So days passed on—two, three, four. Edwin came to his work regularly, but as Mr. Woodcock told him he could be as much with his mother as he liked, he returned and spent his time with her. How dear, how happy, were those hours of re-union! How she saw. in the large dark eyes of that boy, the eyes she had so loved at Mentone, and which her husband had delighted in among the valleys and vineyards of Southern Italy;

how she could trace in that slim. well-formed figure of the boy of sixteen, the appearance of her Savoyard husband; and in that dark luxuriant hair, through which her fingers now so often strayed in delight, love, gratitude, and pride, she saw a memorial of her early married life. Long and often did those two talk together of their weary wanderings and their joyous re-union: but neither one nor other forgot to seek, with love and gratitude, Him whom both had served and loved, and to whose Almighty power

and love they attributed their blessed union.

"Helen, Helen!" cried Mr. Wood-cock, one day soon after the events we have described. In she came to the octagon, still hot from a desperate run up to Edwin's mother, for what no one knew, not even, I believe, herself. "Helen! I am going to have a tea-party, and you are to sit at the head of the table and I at the bottom."

"A tea-party!" said Helen, in dismay. "And I at the top of the table!"

- "Yes," answered her grandfather;
 "a tea-party, and you at the top of
 the table."
- "But who's coming?" she inquired.
- "Edwin and his mother," answered her grandfather.
- "Oh!" said she, with an expression of intense delight, and then she rushed out of the room to tell Harris.

Yes, and the tea-party was to be to-morrow! Edwin's mother had really got better under the frequent presence of her beloved boy, and the

ample sustenance which was sent to her by Mr. Woodcock.

And they were to come to-morrow Edwin was to take the gardenchair, to bring his mother up; and Helen was in such a bustle and excitement that her grandfather had to threaten three times to "nail her ears to the wall," and to send her out of the drawing-room. And out she went, but back she came again.

And, at last, to-morrow came, and Edwin started through the green trellis-work gate with the gardenchair; while Helen hindered Harris as much she could in getting the cups and saucers ready.

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Wood-cock. "Do not be in such a hurry with those cups and saucers. There is a great deal to do with the tables yet before they are put on. Come here, Helen."

Helen, full of excitement, came. What was to be done with the tables? Was Edwin's mother to be brought up on one of them?

"I have some presents to give to Edwin and his mother," said the old gentleman, much more communica-

tive than usual about his plans and intentions. "I am to give some, and you are to give some."

Helen rushed off in ecstasies. The presents! what could they be! what was she to give!

But the tea hour was fast arriving. Edwin had gone with the wheeled chair, and while Helen waited in the room for the arrival of "the presents," Harris brought in the teathings. The little girl opposed this. "Take them away!—take the teathings away! The presents are coming. Stop, Harris—stop! You must

not stop the presents—they are coming."

"Now, Miss Helen," said Harris,
"you are hindering me—you are,
indeed. I shall tumble down, and
all the tea-things with me!"

"Let the tea-things go, and you with them!" cried Helen. "Who cares for them, compared with the presents?"

"Can't the presents be on the big table, and the tea on another?" said Harris.

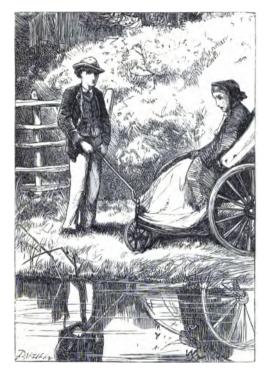
But Edwin was coming with the chair. It was a bright and lovely

Edwin turned down the lane. Over and over again he and his mother stopped, not only to look at the beautiful flowers which still lingered on the hedge, and to delight in the deep shadows which flung their softness over the still sunny lane, but also to talk together. Edwin stopped, and leant upon his hand, his eye fixed upon his mother, and hers on him. They talked—how could they help it?—of the days gone by—days of wandering, days of sorrow, days of sadness.

Very beautiful was the sight of that boy and his mother: very beautiful the child, so long lost, guiding the mother, so long regretted, to a place where she was to be so truly welcomed. She thought that she had never seen so fair a form as that before her: anyone who had been present, would have felt the same.

And now they had reached the pond at the bottom of the lane, and again rested—rested amid the song of insects and the sweet colours and fragrance of the hedge-flowers.

Meanwhile, Helen was in a state of wonderful excitement, for all was ready indoors and the tables prepared. Despite all Helen's efforts at impediment, Harris had managed to



EDWIN AND HIS MOTHER.

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get the tea-things put on the sidetable.

"I shall now go and see Edwin and his mother come along the lane," cried Helen. And away she went.

She reached the gate, but there were no signs—not even a sound. In her eagerness, she climbed up to the top of the hedge, to look down the lane; but she saw no appearance of them yet. Down she darted again, and, unhappily, tore her frock from top to bottom. What was to be done! The procession, the royal procession—more than royal to her—might

come; but she could not appear before the great tea-party in this tattered array. So up she went to Harris.

Little cared she for Harris's anger or frown at that moment. To be back in time for the arrival of the garden-chair—that was all her aim and object. "Harris! I've torn my frock! I don't care a bit! Now, hold your tongue!—I won't say a word, and so don't you! Give me another frock!"

"There's no time, Miss Helen, to give it you now before they come."

- "Then, I'll go!" said she. And off she went, with no frock, and only a petticoat.
- "Come back, Miss Helen!" cried Harris; "you must come back."
 - "I won't."
 - "Here's a frock."

Helen returned, and the frock was put on.

To say the truth, Harris really sympathised with Helen, and was anxious that she should get off again, though she did grumble very heartily.

"It's a new frock, Miss Helen."

And away ran the little girl again to the gate.

But they had not come in sight, nor even within sound. But, never mind, there she stood, new frock and all. And now she seized hold of a little gnarled elm bough, to raise herself up, so that she might see further, but it broke with her, and she fell again. But, it only cut her knee, and did not tear her frock!

At last a sound of wheels crashing on the gravel far up the lane was heard; and then the longed-for little procession turned the corner, and

came in sight, and Helen was off like a dart to the hall door. "Here they are! Here they are!" she cried— "close by. Now, Harris, be ready!"

- "Now, Miss Helen, will you---"
- "No, I won't."
- "Won't what?" said Harris.
 "You don't stop to listen to what I say."
- "I can't now, Harris. Don't plague me!"

And Edwin and his mother came on together. Often had he told her stories of the squirrel—his faithful little friend; often had he longed to show it to his mother. And now they stopped at the bank opposite the green gate, where Helen had first seen him. "And there, mother, said Edwin, "Fido ran up the tree, to please the little lady." He paused a moment. "Poor Fido!" said he, with a sigh. "But never mind," he continued. "I've lost Fido, but

I've found you, dear mother." His mother had longed to see the squirrel—her wandering child's companion—

but that could not be now.

Edwin turned in at the gate, and drew his mother up to the benches

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at the door. When she got out of the chair, and stood in the hall, Mr. Woodcock was surprised to see how different she looked from what she did when lying on her bed. Though very pale and very thin, her figure was tall, and her manner and carriage refined. Edwin was singularly like her.

He led his mother into the long, low dining-room. The table in the middle was covered with parcels of various kinds and sizes. Helen gave Edwin's mother a chair, and her boy then took his place beside her. Mr. Woodcock stood by the window with his hat on, and his stick in his hand. It was very difficult for Helen to be quiet. The tea-things were on another table. Edwin and his mother waited in amazement for what was coming.

"Now, Miss Helen," said the old gentleman, "you begin. You know yours is for Edwin, and mine are for his mother."

Helen's hands quivered with excitement, and her face was flushed. She thrust her little fingers together two or three times in her anxiety, and then took a large parcel, covered with brown paper, which stood in the middle of the table. She pushed it towards Edwin. "There—there," said she, "that is for you—it's my present!—undo it, undo it!"

The boy took the parcel, and began to open the brown paper covering. He had only begun to do it, but that was enough. His touch was sufficient; for in an instant the little animal had leapt from its perch to the wires. The paper was thrown off, and, without a word, Edwin hurriedly opened the door of the little

cage, to set the anxious captive free. With one bound the squirrel leapt into its master's bosom, its tiny claws were on his cheek, and its small, round, twinkling eyes fixed upon his

face. Edwin stroked the soft fur of his old and faithful friend. For a moment he did not speak. He controlled the emotion which the sight of his little companion excited, and he turned to his mother. "There, mother, there it is!" And

he placed it in his mother's lap. Already the tears had found their way down her wan cheek. Helen was crying—Mr. Woodcock quietly watching.

The wanderer was caressing her boy's faithful friend, but Fido would not stop. He knew Edwin too well, and was back again in his bosom.

"Now, now, Edwin," cried Helen, eagerly, "you are not to say 'Thank you!'—you are not to say 'Thank you!'—mind—mind—mind. Grandfather said, before you came, you were not to say 'Thank you!' because he said he hated speeches and all that; and he said that if you did,

he would 'nail your ears to the wall;'" and she looked round slyly at Mr. Woodcock.

"You naughty little hussy," said he; "you know I said no such thing."

"Yes, grandfather, I know you didn't; but you meant it."

"Get along with you," cried he.
"What right have you to tattle about what I meant? You shall have no tea, that you shan't."

Helen smiled, and looked up shyly at Edwin. She understood her grandfather, and so did Edwin now. "Well, but," said she, "grand-father is going to make a speech; I know that."

But Edwin's eyes had spoken the thanks, the deep thanks which he had been forbidden to offer in words. He had not yet noticed that Fido's cage was quite different from the one in which he used to live. It was a high and beautiful cage, with brass wires. This was indeed a new home for Fido. But as soon as Edwin had had time to look round the room, he saw the old cage in which the squirrel had dwelt and played

so long. It stood on the side-table. Edwin saw all, but said nothing.

Mr. Woodcock now began his speech. He still kept his hat on, and his stick, with the black cross upon its top, was still in his hand. "I have no speech to make," said he. "I tell you, good woman, that though I have known you only a very short time, and although I am a very plain-spoken man, and take pity on few, I nevertheless have taken some interest in you; and more than that, for one like me, I have a great

respect for you. I have seen but little of you, and I hate beggars. But, as I said, I take a deep interest in you and in your sorrows and troubles. Yes, I do; and I am willing to do all I can for you on your own account. But I have known more of your boy, who stands by your side there; and I will tell you what, my good woman, I never came across a youth whom I had more reason to respect and regard than him. I am not a man to care much about boys who work for me, but your lad has won all my regard,

and while I live he will never want a friend."

Here Edwin coloured deeply, and fixed his eyes on the ground.

"I doubted him at first," continued the old gentleman, "as I do everybody, especially boys; but I have learnt since to trust him both in word and deed. He has never deceived me, and I have put him to many tests,—yes, I have, I assure you. He has never failed me yet, and, although it is not my way to talk religion, I trust he may not fail in his duty to his God. You are blest with a

son of whom you may well be proud and grateful. Few have such. May he go on as he has begun. And now, one word more. built a lodge at one of the gates of my garden,—it is just finished. If you like it, I intend to give it to you and Edwin to live in. You will find it, I hope, warm and comfortable. All you will have to do will be to look after the gate; Edwin will go on with his work for me, although I intend at once to raise him to a place in my establishment, which will show the high trust I place in

him, and will give him good wages. You will have the lodge rent free, and I allow you six shillings weekly besides."

Old Mr. Woodcock began to move towards the door, with his hat still on his head, and his stick in his hand. He had made his speech. But as he drew near the door, he turned to Edwin, and said, "God bless you, my boy!" And the good old man was gone.

Helen had to do the rest. The other parcels contained various articles, which Mr. Woodcock had bought for Edwin's mother towards furnishing her new home. Nothing portable had been forgotten. The kitchen, at least, had been thoroughly supplied.

Tea now began, with Helen at one end of the table, and Mr. Woodcock, who had returned, at the other; and Harris, for once really anxious to keep down her fidgetiness, not to say temper, waited on all. Very happy was that tea-party. The poor wandering mother by the side of her own child; little Helen, who had first cared for him; and Mr. Wood-

cock, who had been doing, and was going to do, so much for them.

When tea was over, they all set forth to see the new lodge, Helen dancing before them, though old Mr. Woodcock almost overtook her, stick and all, in his wish to be first showman of the new home.

After a few days the wanderers settled down in the lodge, the long-lost mother and the long-lost child. And Fido had his place in his cage close under the window.

Another tea-party was given,—at

the lodge this time,—at which Edwin sat at one end of the table, and his mother at the other. There were many guests. There were little Helen and Harris; there were Frank and Robert, with flowers in their buttonholes; there was Mrs. Callard, in all her finery; and they had scarcely begun, when a heavy tread was heard outside, and a loud knock. The door opened, and old Mr. Woodcock came in, hat and all.

"You didn't give me an invitation," said he; "but I was determined to come, so here I am;" and

he sat down next Edwin's mother. That was another happy evening.

Edwin rose rapidly in Mr. Wood-cock's favour. Helen paid about ten visits a day to the lodge. And sometimes on quiet summer evenings, or by the cheerful hearth on winter nights, when Edwin and his mother were seated together, by window or by fire, they would look up at the three texts which Mr. Woodcock had had painted on their wall:—

[&]quot;Blessed is he who provideth for the sick and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the day of trouble."

"Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

"Forasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me."

These were the texts on the wall of Edwin's home. Mr. Woodcock often came to see them; and when, after his visits, he turned down the lane, Edwin would look at his mother, and say,

"They used to say, mother, and I am sure it is true, 'If he has a rough manner, he has a kind heart.'"

THE END.

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